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IS 502 Vocation of Ministry

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Version D

This working copy of the syllabus was created on 5 February 2009. Be sure that you print out a FINAL DRAFT copy before our course begins in September 2003.

IS502XL-- VOCATION OF MINISTRY [3 HOURS]

Dates: Tuesday, September 2 - Thursday, December 11, 2003

Enrollment Capacity: 20

Professor: Toddy Holeman, Ph.D.

Professor of Counseling and Associate Dean, School of Theology

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OR <Toddy Holeman> (via FirstClass Client)

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Welcome to Vocation of Ministry! I am delighted to be your instructor and learning guide for this course. You may already have a strong sense of who you are in Christ and the implications of his call upon your life. If so, this course should help you to strengthen and to further clarify the nature and implications of that call. For those of you who may yet feel tentative about a "call" and vocation, be of good cheer. We're embarking on an exploratory journey that should lead you toward making some vocational commitments. Together we will grow in Christ and in embodying his claims upon our lives. I'm here to support you on the journey and to hold you accountable along the way. Blessings, Toddy Holeman

First things first: "The development of this extended learning syllabus is intended for distribution to members of the course and others by my permission. It is not intended for general distribution on the Internet. Permission to copy, in whole or in part, must be requested from the professor (Toddy Holeman)." Thanks for honoring these instructions.

And then some preliminaries: Teaching and learning online is a growing experience for us all. Periodically we will need to extend grace to one another as we communicate and work together in this medium. For example, are the instructions clear? Are the assignments and discussions working? Are you having problems? Please let me know. What I might consider "crystal clear" might seem as "clear as mud" to you.

Also let me and your course mates know if you find that you are going to be "off line" for a time. That will save us from wondering where you are.

It has also been my experience that life throws curve balls into our well-constructed plans. If you find yourself falling behind because life has overwhelmed you, please contact me by phone or e-mail as soon as you can so we can discuss your situation and problem solve together. Too often students ignore the support and help that a professor can offer at the front end of a crisis.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course seeks to ask and address the question, "How is our vocation as those called to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained?" The purpose of this course is to explore from a Wesleyan perspective the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood

and vocation by examining the nexus between call to ministry and formation of persons in ministry.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Having successfully completed this course, you should:

1. Understand the nature of Christian vocation (including God's call of all Christian disciples to ministry in church and world) from a Wesleyan perspective;
2. Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry;
4. Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical conduct;
5. Demonstrate commitment to "the way" of the Christian disciple through immersion in the means of grace;
6. Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry; and
7. Project a curricular plan consistent with vocational discernment.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This e-course is structured around required readings, video and audio presentations, e-team conferencing, spiritual formation groups, personal engagement with "works of piety" and "works of mercy" that are central to Wesleyan thought and practice, and written assignments. Our work week runs from Tuesday Noon (ET) to Tuesday Noon (ET). I will post one week "ahead" to help ease the burden of travel schedules.

What follows are the requirements for this course and their relative weight toward your final grade.

1. E-Conferences (20%) and Course Activities

1.1 E-Conferences

- 1.1.1 I will assign you to an e-team for conferencing.
- 1.1.1 Each week (normally) your e-team will collaborate to complete an assignment that relates to the goals for each module.
- 1.1.2 Postings will normally range between 50 and 150 words.
- 1.1.3 E-conferencing calls for good "e-manners." Remember that your team members do not benefit from hearing your tone of voice or seeing your body language, SO BE CAREFUL HOW YOU PUT THINGS IN WRITING!!!! You may be perceived as shouting, when you only meant to add an emphasis. ☺
- 1.1.4 I will monitor interaction and discussion of the assignments and grade your individual contribution to the overall discussion content as well as your contribution to facilitating the group discussion process.
- 1.1.5 At the conclusion of each week (transition Tuesdays) all postings to the Discussion Center will be moved to the Archives. While you will not be able to respond to peer postings from this point forward, you will be able to access the summary of discussions for the week. I will remind you of the dates and times this will occur week-to-week.

- 1.1.6 Course Objective 2: Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry.

Sample Grading Rubric for E-Conference Assignments:

- a. Did you give a succinct, understandable statement that reflected how you understood the text content as it relates to the discussion question?
- b. Did you reflect critically on the interface between course content and personal experience?
- c. Did you post your own answers/responses in a timely way, so as to promote conversation among the members of your team?
- d. How effective were you in generating ideas/proposals for group interaction?
- e. How effective were you in your engagement with the ideas/proposals generated by others on your Team?
- f. Did you respond to your Teammates as per the instructions for the exercise?
- g. Did you attend to issues of form and style appropriate to formal writing?

1.2 Course Activities

During the semester you will engage in several learning activities that relate to our course goals. Reporting on your response to these activities happens in your in-process paper.

- 1.2.1 Module 3: Attend 2 worship services in congregations that are culturally or ethnically different from your own. Course Objective 3: *Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry*
- 1.2.2 If you are a M.Div. student you will also select a faculty advisor by the conclusion of this course, and make that official. You can use the faculty video testimonies and the faculty bios [ExL Campus/Student Info/Advising/Faculty Profiles]. If you are a MA student, the Office of the Dean of the School of Theology automatically assigns your faculty advisor.
- 1.2.3 Document that you contacted your faculty advisor by e-mail, chat room, phone, V-tel, or in person (!) and discussed your projected degree plan relative to your vocational goals. Course Objective 7: *Project a curricular plan consistent with vocational discernment.*

NOTE: If you have an advisor, take care of this item prior to pre-registration for the next semester. If you need to select an advisor, try to do so prior to pre-registration and then meet with your “real” advisor (rather than someone from the Advising Pool) and take care of this item. If you wait until the very end of the semester to attend to this, you are likely to discover that faculty are consumed with end-of-the semester tasks, and cannot easily accommodate your request for an extended conversation by chat room or phone.

2. Spiritual Formation Group (10%)

Because spiritual formation is an important part of this course, you will participate in a weekly or bi-weekly small group that provides opportunity for fellowship, sharing, and

prayer. You will begin this commitment by the second week of class. If you are not currently in a group, you may start one on your own. Your group should have at least two other persons in it and meet weekly for one hour each week. Richard Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline* will provide the foundational content for weekly reading and group reflections. *[Course Objective 5: Demonstrate commitment to "the way" of the Christian disciple through immersion in the means of grace].*

3. Commitment to Social Justice (10%)

A commitment to social justice is one of the emphases of the Wesleyan tradition. You are expected to invest a minimum of 4 hours of service in your community. You may work in a mercy ministry that your church sponsors, or you may choose to volunteer to help in some other community service organization. For example, your group can serve dinner at a Ronald McDonald House in your area, work for a soup kitchen, help out at the Salvation Army, work on a Habitat for Humanity home, give respite to a full-time caregiver, provide housekeeping or lawn care for a homebound person, etc. Please clear your project with me in advance. By the **conclusion of Module 3**, you are to write a brief (one-page) description of your service involvement describing one thing about the experience that stands out for you and your personal reaction to the experience.

In addition, by the **conclusion of Module 3** you will have attended two services in a church(es) that is (are) ethnically different from you. This will be the basis for your reflection in your "In-Process" paper for Module 3. If you are currently worshipping in a cross-cultural setting (e.g., international students or other ethnic minority) you should contact the instructors for ways in which you need to adjust this assignment.

Course Objective 1: Understand the nature of Christian vocation (including God's call of all Christian disciples to ministry in church and world) from a Wesleyan perspective, and Course Objective 3: Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry

4. "In-Process" Papers (60%)

You will prepare four, five to seven page "in-process" papers that integrate course content, your understanding of your vocation of ministry, and assessment surveys where appropriate. These you will send to my electronic office (IS502TH Office) as an attached document. The four "in-process" papers will then be submitted as one integrated paper at the end of the semester, also sent as an attached document to my electronic office.

- 4.1 Papers must conform to MLA form and style according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].
- 4.2 I will grade all submitted work and will seek to return your papers to you in a timely fashion.
- 4.3 All written work is due by 12:00 Noon (ET) on the due date.
 - 4.3.1 In-process paper #1 (Module 1) September 26, 2003 Midnight (ET)
 - 4.3.2 In-process paper #2 (Module 2) October 17, 2003 Midnight (ET)
 - 4.3.3 In-process paper #3 (Module 3) November 7, 2003 Midnight (ET)
 - 4.3.4 In-process paper #4 (Module 4), December 8, 2003 Midnight (ET)

4.4 If you need to negotiate an alternate due date with me, please discuss this with me BEFORE the assignment is due.

Course Objective 6: Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry. Other objectives also relate to these papers.

Note: One point will be added to your **final** grade if **all** assignments [E-team discussions, papers, & activities] are completed or submitted on time.

5. Required Reading/Resources

Textbooks

- Chilcote, Paul. *John Wesley Speaks on Christian Vocation*
- Foster, Richard J. (1998). *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. HarperSan Francisco.
- Grenz, S. & Bell, R. (1995). *Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Groothuis, R. M. (1997). *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker
- Guinness, O. (1998). *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*. Waco, TX: Word.
- Smith, G. (1997). *Listening to God in Times of Choice*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Willimon, William H. *Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.

ATS Electronic Reserves

- Collins, K. J. (1998). "Spirituality and Critical Thinking: Are they really so different?" *Evangelical Journal*, 16(1), 30-43. ISSN: 0741-1758*
- Trepagnier, B. (2001). "Deconstructing Categories: The Exposure of Silent Racism." *Symbolic Interaction*, 24(2).*

*Accessing ATS Electronic Reserves:

A special folder for ATS Electronic Reserves for this course is located within our Course Icon called "Supplemental Texts."

Web-based Documents

Wesley, John. Sermon "The Means of Grace." <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/serm-016.stm>

Women and Wesley's Time <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/wesleywomen.stm>

Facione, Peter A. "Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts."

http://www.calpress.com/pdf_files/what&why.pdf

I have also downloaded this as a pdf file in the Course Center.

Scriven, Michael & Paul, Richard, *Defining Critical Thinking*.

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/Univeristy/univclass/Defining.html>

Other Document within Course Center

A Summarization of the Salient Points of Richard Paul's Work Critical Thinking by Ken Collins

Copy of Peter A. Facione's "Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts."

Mucherera, Tapiwa. "Cross-Cultural Studies of Majority-Minority Relations" [Course Center]

Other Materials

Course CD's (distributed by Information Technology Department via snail-mail)

DiSC (distributed during early September via snail-mail)

GRADING POLICY

Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (catalog, p. 24):

A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives

B= Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C= Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives

D= Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

F= Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

A plus (+) or minus (–) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good;

C– = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

Incomplete Policy

A grade of "I" denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable emergency**, which does **not** include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. A request for an incomplete requires not only my approval, but also the approval of the Dean of the School of Theology. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

COURSE OUTLINE AND LEARNING GOALS**1. *Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Vocation from a Wesleyan Perspective (September 2- 23, 2003)***

At the completion of module 1, you will be able to:

1. Integrate your sense of what God desires with certain areas of your personal giftedness;
2. Discuss the relationship between personal responsibility and choice in how you respond may respond to a perceived call of God;
3. Articulate how God is moving in your life regarding your vocation by using the aspects of vocation based on the Wesleyan quadrilateral.

2. *Module 2: Relationship between Critical Reasoning and Spirituality (September 23 – October 14, 2003)*

At the completion of this module, you will be able to:

1. Articulate your own decision making process and the relative weight of critical thinking, spirituality, and theological reflection in their small groups and in writing.
2. Demonstrate your understanding of the roles of critical reasoning, theological reflection, and spirituality on your call to ministry.

3. *Module 3: Cultural, Ethnic, and Gender Issues (October 14 – November 4, 2003)*

At the completion of this module, you will be able to:

1. Describe key issues and problems, which affect ethnic minorities and their leadership;
2. Explain the reality of racism and gender issues, their origins and the negative impact they have on building the Kingdom of God;
3. Discuss how racism affects inter-ethnic and inter-church relations and how to effectively minister in such contexts.

4. *Module 4: Moral Formation and Integrity for Christian Ministry (November 4 – December 5, 2003)*

By the completion of the module, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the importance of the character of and the maintenance of a sense of wholeness by a Christian minister;
2. Identify ways to maintain emotional and physical boundaries with people;
3. Identify ways in which boundary violations occur;
4. Explain the relationship between moral formation, individual integrity, and the vocation of ministry.

ONLINE (COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM) COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

The Collaborative Classroom is built upon the First Class Client platform that Asbury Seminary uses for its e-mail and intranet systems. An “IS502” folder will be loaded on your Desktop within First Class and within this folder you will be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as any other materials I may choose to post for the entire class to access.
2. The Discussion Center will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Discussion Center. You will also post all of your entire-class (versus team) discussion responses here. Normally these will be organized around threaded discussions. In a threaded discussion, your comment builds on the comments of those who preceded you. You might think of a threaded discussion as a file drawer in which all the comments are organized sequentially so that you can follow the flow of conversation. Each new question or posting begins a different threaded discussion.
3. Your work with your e-team will be done within the Team Folder. Any intra-team discussions will take place here, in contrast to the Discussion Center that is for the entire class.
4. The IS502X Office is for private correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly to all your classmates or items that you think may embarrass me if they were to appear publicly. It is also the place where you will send your assignments as attached files.
5. The Archives Center will be used for storing correspondence that has already been explored during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unwieldy. At the conclusion of each discussion period, I will summarize the individual postings and file them in the Archives Center.
6. The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among participants. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. None of the conversations carried on in this location are ever saved.
7. The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL and DMIN students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, the services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, “Guidelines for Success,” Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a PowerPoint Viewer, as well as a Real Audio player. I encourage you to explore these resources, and particularly to utilize the chapel access in order to connect with the seminary’s on-campus opportunities for spiritual growth.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The Seminary provides a wide variety of support services to ensure your success as an ExL student.

1. ExL Technical Support: Jared Porter
<ExL Support>
859.858.2373
2. ExL Director (General Questions): Kevin Osborne
<ExL Director>
859.858.2276
3. ATS Bookstore
1.866.855.8252 (toll free) OR 859.858.2293
4. Reference Librarian: Hannah Kirsch
<Hannah Kirsch>
859.858.2189
5. For **interlibrary loans**, contact Dot James at Dot_James@asburyseminary.edu.

Obtaining Library Materials and Reference Assistance

Email: Ats_Reference@asburyseminary.edu

Toll-Free Reference Help Line: 1-866-454-2733

ExL students are encouraged to make use of local libraries, if possible. However, library services are always available to students through Asbury's B. L. Fisher Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be e-mailed to the Reference Desk (Ats_Reference@asburyseminary.edu). The Reference workers (Hannah, Robbie, and Nina) will also assist ExL students with reference requests, using various online databases, or doing research on a specific topic.

To request material from the B.L. Fisher Library, begin by searching the library catalog (for books available in the library) or one of the restricted journal databases available on the library's website (www.asburyseminary.edu/library - choose "library catalog" or "restricted databases"). Then send an email to the reference desk citing the sources that you would like to request. If you need help searching the databases, do not hesitate to call (1-866-454-2733) or email the reference desk. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Wilmore campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page); however, shipping via media rate is free. (Media rate normally takes 5 business days for shipping, but it can take two weeks to addresses in the West). Express mail services (prices vary according to weight) and scanning (10 cents per page in pdf format) are also available. Requests generally require 1-2 business days to be processed. Plan ahead and make your requests early enough to allow for shipping and processing!